



# Upper Loup Scoop

Upper Loup NRD

October 2022

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## Calendar of Events

### October

- 10** Columbus Day  
*Office Closed*
- 13** Board Meeting  
*ULNRD Office, 7pm CT*
- 22** Firearm Hunter
- 23** Education Course

### November

- 10** Board Meeting  
*Stapleton Community Center, 12:30pm CT*
- 11** Veteran's Day  
*Office Closed*
- 24** Thanksgiving
- 25** *Office Closed*

### December

- 8** Board Meeting  
*ULNRD Office, 3pm CT*
- 25** Christmas Day  
*Office Closed*

## Firearm Hunter Education Course

On Saturday, October 22nd and Sunday, October 23rd, a Firearm Hunter Education Classroom course will be held at the Upper Loup NRD Office. Both classes will begin at 1:00 pm CT and end at 6:00 pm CT. Participants will need to attend both days in order to complete the course. The State of Nebraska requires hunters age 12 through 29 who hunt any species to complete the course. Anyone younger than 11 may take the course but will not be certified. They must also be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Please register online for this event at [outdoornebraska.gov](http://outdoornebraska.gov)

## Upper Loup NRD Welcomes Two New Team Members

### Justin Sprague



The Upper Loup NRD welcomes Justin Sprague as a new Resources Technician! He began his duties on August 1st, 2022. Justin graduated from Wilcox Public Schools in 1999, and went on to further his education at Colby Community College, majoring in Business Ag. Justin has ranched in the Sandhills since 2004. In his free time, he trains horses and enjoys all things rodeo!

### Shaylee Scranton

The Upper Loup NRD welcomes Shaylee Scranton to our staff! She began her duties on August 9th, 2022. Shaylee graduated from Thedford High School in 2017. She then went on to further her education at Doane University, where she graduated in 2020 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts major in Film & Media Production and a Bachelor of Science minor in Environmental Studies. Shaylee lives south of Thedford on the Scranton Ranch. She enjoys too many hobbies to list, but some favorites include raising chickens, gardening, creating art, sewing, clay making, and playing video games!



## 2022 – 2023 Budget

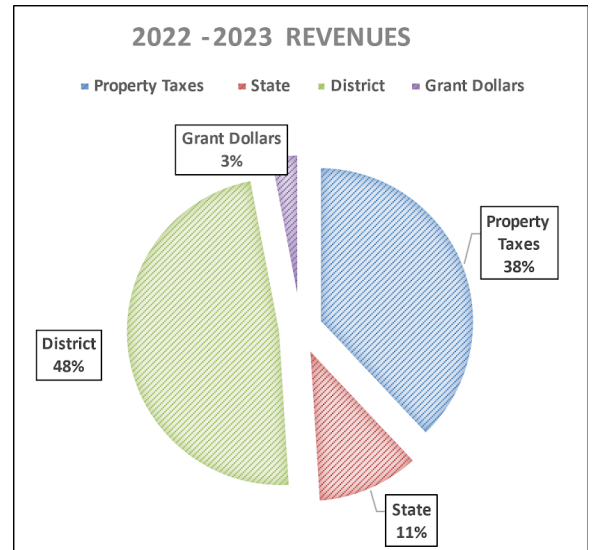
Thursday, September 8th, the Upper Loup NRD Board of Directors adopted the 2022-23 fiscal year budget. With most all services and supplies going up we are happy to report that our budget asking remained the same from last year to this year. The levy rate is down at 0.12792 (1.2 cents per 100 dollars of property valuation). NRDs have the option to levy up to 4.5 cents per 100 dollars of valuation to aid in fulfilling all their statutory responsibilities, which we are well below. With conscientious budgeting, grants, and product sales, the NRD continues to provide a wide variety of services including conservation practices, water quality testing, water quantity management, wildlife habitat improvement, noxious weed control, soil sampling, yard enhancement, recycling, and camp scholarships, to name a few. Less than half of our total budget (38%) is supported by tax dollars.

## Soil Testing

Soil testing is an important diagnostic tool to evaluate nutrient imbalances, understand plant growth, and optimize crop production. Management of soil also protects our environment from pollutants of improper fertilization such as excess phosphorus and nitrogen. Information gathered from routinely testing soil health will provide various benefits including crop and profit yield increases. The Upper Loup NRD has a cost share program to help land owners defray part of the costs associated with testings. You can find the application on our website or stop by the NRD.

## No-Till Drill Available for Rent

There are many benefits when it comes to using a no-till technique such as reduction of soil erosion, soil moisture and organic matter retention, protection of groundwater quality, reduction of chemical runoff, and reducing soil compaction. With the help of funding through a grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, a 15 foot Great Plains No Till Drill is now available for rent through the ULNRD in addition to our 10 foot drill. The pricing for the 15 foot drill is \$10.00/acre plus tax, and the 10 foot is \$8.00/acre plus tax. Please contact the office for more information regarding availability.



## Jr. High Field Day Held in August

On August 24th, a field day was held in Thedford at the NRD office for District 8th graders. It was a great turnout with around 60 kids in attendance from Dunning, Hyannis, Mullen, Thedford, and Stapleton schools.

Students were able to learn about natural resources such as water, range, forestry, soils, and wildlife during our field day with various hands on activities presented by volunteers from the North Platte NRCS, Thedford NRCS, Nebraska Game & Parks, USGS, and Upper Loup NRD staff. Youths were able to calculate stream flow with Chris Hobza (USGS) at the river, learn about soil health with Chuck Markley (NRCS), try their hand at identifying native grasses with JuliAnna Schaeffer (NRCS), forestry in the arboretum with ULNRD staff Shane Young & Justin Sprague, and finally discuss wildlife with Meghan Manary (Game & Parks).



## Cost-Share Funds Available for Fall Noxious Weed Control

In Nebraska, landowners are legally required to control noxious weeds on your property. The common noxious weeds on the Nebraska State list include: plumeless thistle, musk thistle, diffuse knapweed, spotted knapweed, Canada thistle, leafy spurge, purple loosestrife and saltcedar. Fortunately, not all of these weeds are found in our District. Yearly management is key as skipping a year can cause the weed to re-infest rapidly. To help battle those found in our area (leafy spurge, Canada thistle, musk thistle), the Upper Loup Natural Resources District provides cost-share funds for BOTH fall and spring treatment to landowners in the NRD area. Funds are available to cover 50% of the cost of approved chemicals up to \$500 per landowner.

## Enter the NACD Poster Contest

The National Association of Conservation Districts has begun their 2022 poster contest. This competition is for Kindergarten through 12th grade students in public schools or home schools. The goal is to create a poster that highlights the work of conservation districts that protect and enhance natural resources. This year's theme is, "Healthy Soil, Healthy Life." Students are asked to reflect on this message and create a piece of artwork that depicts what this means to them and their community. Individuals who participate have the opportunity to win monetary prizes for their submitted works. The deadline to submit your poster to the ULNRD is Wednesday, November 17th. For more information on the contest, entry forms, or rules please contact Lexi at the ULNRD.



## Flowmeter Reading

Our technicians will soon be out reading flowmeters this Fall. You will recognize them by the pickup with the Upper Loup NRD emblem on the side. Weather permitting, all readings shall be completed by January 1.



## ULNRD Staff

**Anna Baum**

*General Manager*

**Jamie Green**

*Administrative Secretary*

**Lexi Spurlin**

*Information & Education*

*Coordinator,*

*Resources Technician*

**Justin Sprague**

*Resources Technician*

**Shaylee Scranton**

*Staff*

**Spud Rowley**

*Recycling Coordinator*

**Pam Peterson**

*Field Office Secretary*

## ULNRD

### Board of Directors

#### Sub-District 1

*Eric Storer*

*Rebecca Connealy*

#### Sub-District 2

*Judy Ridenour*

*John Kraye*

#### Sub-District 3

*Chris Higgins*

*Miles Maseberg*

#### Sub-District 4

*Tony Ruhter*

*Eric Schipporeit*

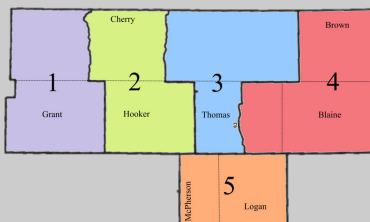
#### Sub-District 5

*Tom Johnson*

*Richard Burnside*

#### At Large

*Patrick Wright*



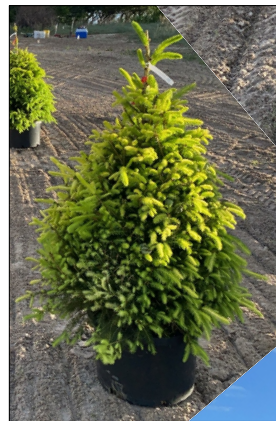
For latest news, check out  
[www.upperloupnrd.org](http://www.upperloupnrd.org)

## Fall is the Time to Start Tree Planning

Trees provide important benefits, including protecting homes and livestock from wind and snow, helping to reduce heating and cooling costs, preventing soil erosion, and also providing wildlife habitat. The Upper Loup NRD offers tree program services including: planning, planting, weed barrier installation or weed control, and drip irrigation. Fall is a good time to think about tree planning. The ULNRD provides



a 50% cost-share along with free tree planning services. Trees and shrubs, planting, weed mulch, and drip irrigation systems are all eligible for the cost-share program.



## Fall Container Trees

Need to spruce up your landscape or replace a few trees in your tree line? Fall container trees are available for purchase! Sizes range from: 2 7/8" for \$5.75, 3 5/8" for \$8.75, and 5" for \$12.75. Species and quantity are very limited. Please contact our office for the current availability of species, quantity, and sizes.

## Hefty Energy Bags and their Unique End Products

You can find plastic packaging just about anywhere; chip bags, candy wrappers, etc. Typically, these items are difficult to recycle due to the small size and effects they may have on recycling machinery. Rather than these items being sent off to the landfill, Hefty Energy Bags were created to collect single use plastics such as utensils, snack bags, grocery sacks, and similar items and process it into raw material for various uses. After collecting materials, products can be transformed into energy resources used to fuel cement kilns, converted into concrete aggregate for cement production, or ground into smaller pieces used to make new products including construction materials.



We have one of these unique operations in our own state of Nebraska. First Star Fiber of Omaha is currently processing Energy Bags for end market materials. As a reminder, once full these bags can be placed directly inside of your local plastic recycling trailer.